MARVEL COMICS

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

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HOW CAN THE

Fantastic Four

397 FEB

SURVIVE...

...A WATCHER'S WRAITH?

RYAN 94 BULANADI

REED RICHARDS, MISTER FANTASTIC! **BEN GRIMM,** THE THING! **SUE RICHARDS,** INVISIBLE WOMAN! **JOHNNY STORM,** THE HUMAN TORCH! TRANSFORMED BY AN ACCIDENT IN OUTER SPACE INTO SOMETHING MUCH MORE THAN HUMAN. THEY VOWED TO USE THEIR AWESOME POWERS TO HELP MANKIND CHART THE UNKNOWN. STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

THE FABULOUS *FF* FACE A STUNNING AND UNEXPECTED TURNING POINT--

RESURRECTION!

FLIGHT 387 FROM TUCSON, ARIZONA HAS BARELY TOUCHED DOWN AT JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ITS PASSENGERS HARDLY HAVING TIME TO DISEMBARK--
-- WHEN A CERTAIN WELL-KNOWN CELEBRITY SUDDENLY ROCKETS THROUGH THE TERMINAL IN HIS OWN UNIQUE MANNER!
FLAME ON!
HEY! I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED THAT GUY IN FIRST CLASS...
HE'S THE HUMAN TORCH!
I DON'T WANT TO CREATE A PANIC, BUT I CAN'T ALLOW THIS CROWD TO DELAY ME!
I WANT AN AUTOGRAPH, MOM!
UH... MAYBE NEXT TIME, CHRISTOPHER!
THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE! I'VE GOT TO REACH FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
MY SISTER'S LIFE MIGHT DEPEND UPON IT!

TOM DEFALCO AND PAUL RYAN SCRIPT, PLOT AND PENCILS *DAN BULANADI* INKS *JOHN COSTANZA* LETTERS
JOHN KALISZ COLORIST *MIKE ROCKWITZ* EDITOR *MARK GRUENWALD* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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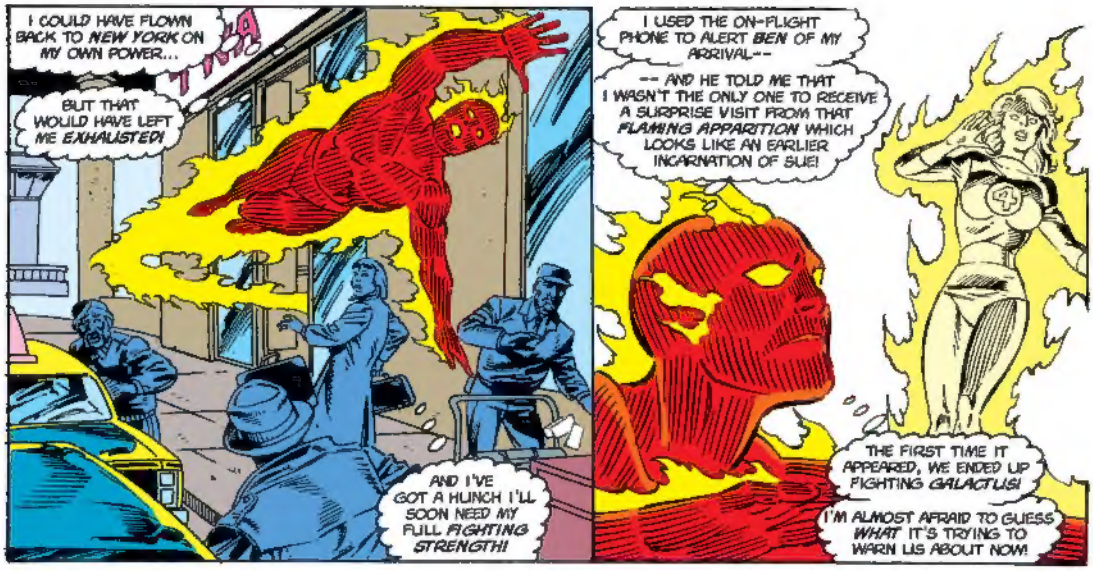
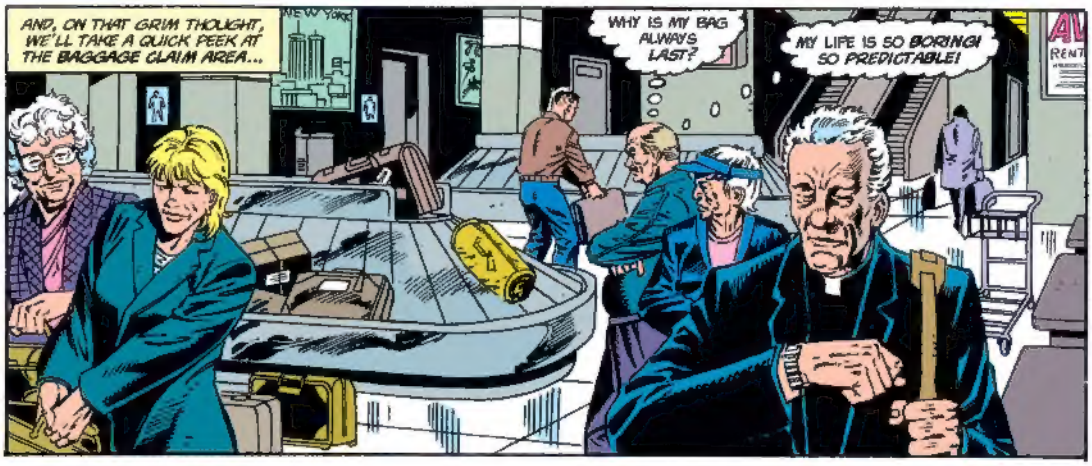
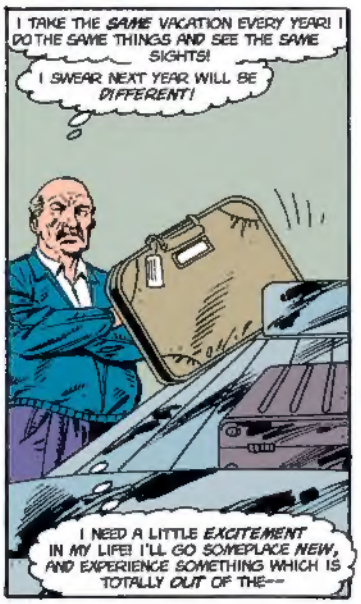
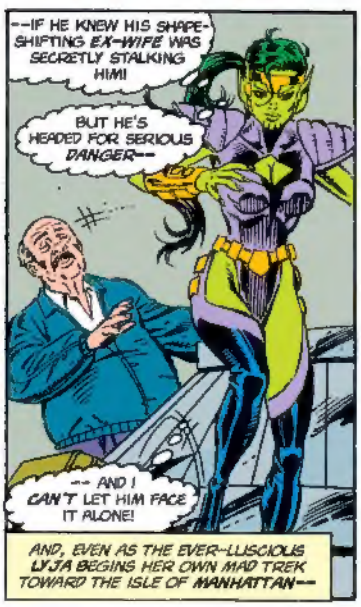

I COULD HAVE FLOWN BACK TO NEW YORK ON MY OWN POWER...
BUT THAT WOULD HAVE LEFT ME EXHAUSTED!
AND I'VE GOT A HUNCH I'LL SOON NEED MY FULL FIGHTING STRENGTH!
I USED THE ON-FLIGHT PHONE TO ALERT BEN OF MY ARRIVAL--
-- AND HE TOLD ME THAT I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE TO RECEIVE A SURPRISE VISIT FROM THAT FLAMING APPARITION WHICH LOOKS LIKE AN EARLIER INCARNATION OF SUE!
THE FIRST TIME IT APPEARED, WE ENDED UP FIGHTING GALACTUS!
I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO GUESS WHAT IT'S TRYING TO WARN US ABOUT NOW!

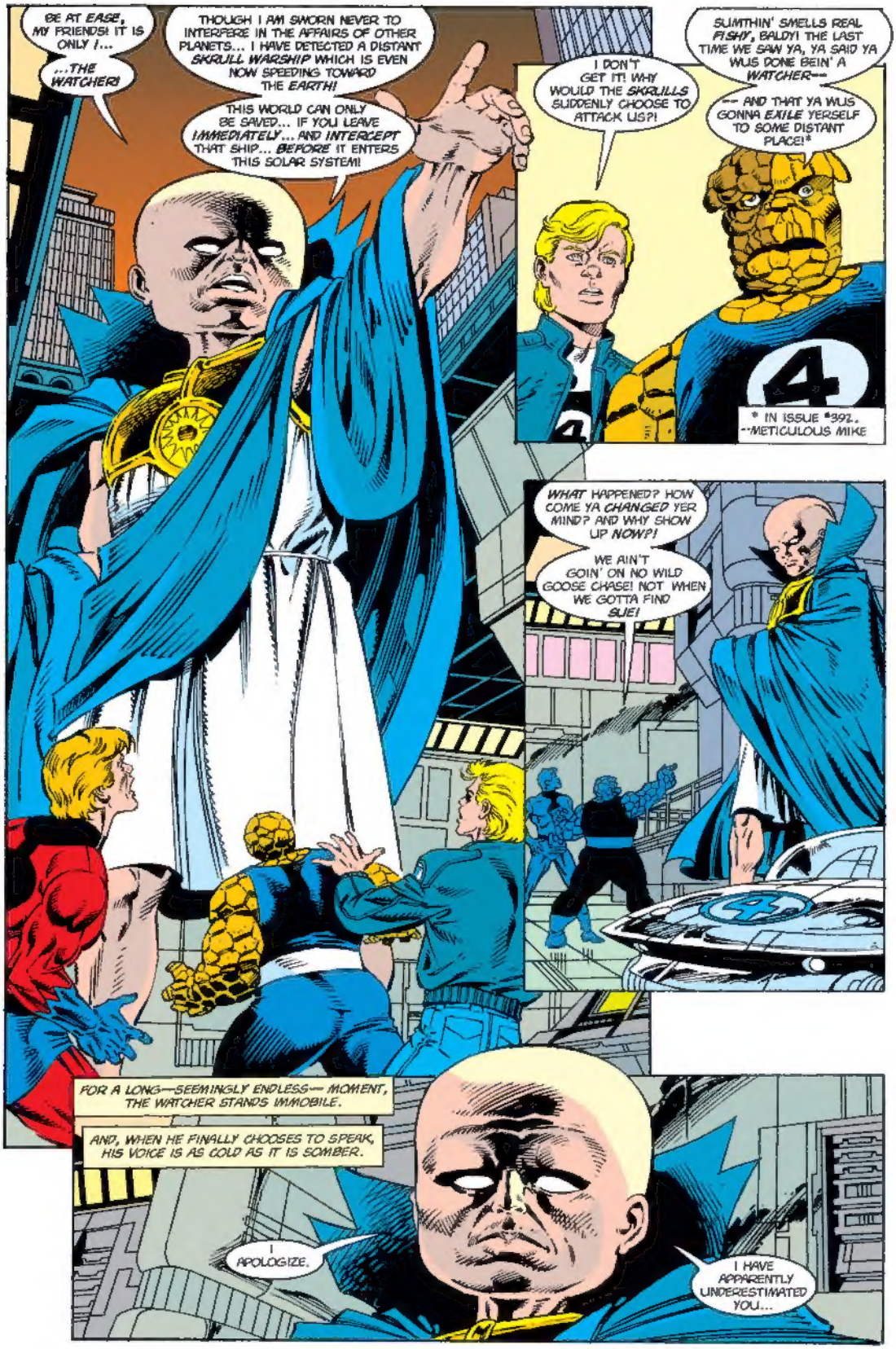

AND, ON THAT GRIM THOUGHT, WE'LL TAKE A QUICK PEEK AT THE BAGGAGE CLAIM AREA...
WHY IS MY BAG ALWAYS LAST?
MY LIFE IS SO BORING! SO PREDICTABLE!

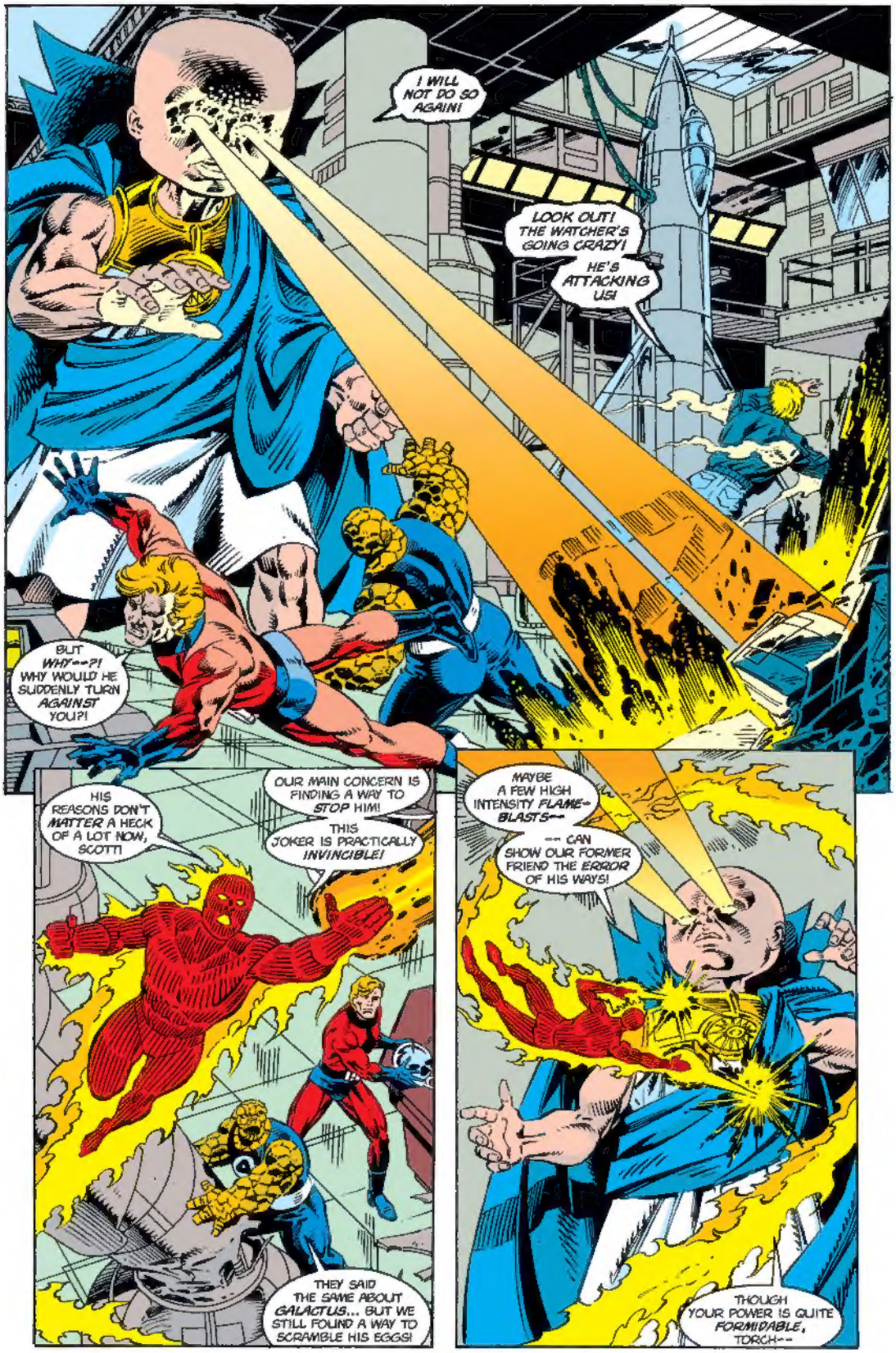

I TAKE THE SAME VACATION EVERY YEAR! I DO THE SAME THINGS AND SEE THE SAME SIGHTS!
I SWEAR NEXT YEAR WILL BE DIFFERENT!
I NEED A LITTLE EXCITEMENT IN MY LIFE! I'LL GO SOMEPLACE NEW, AND EXPERIENCE SOMETHING WHICH IS TOTALLY OUT OF THE--

-- ORDINARY?!?
JOHNNY WOULD FREAK--

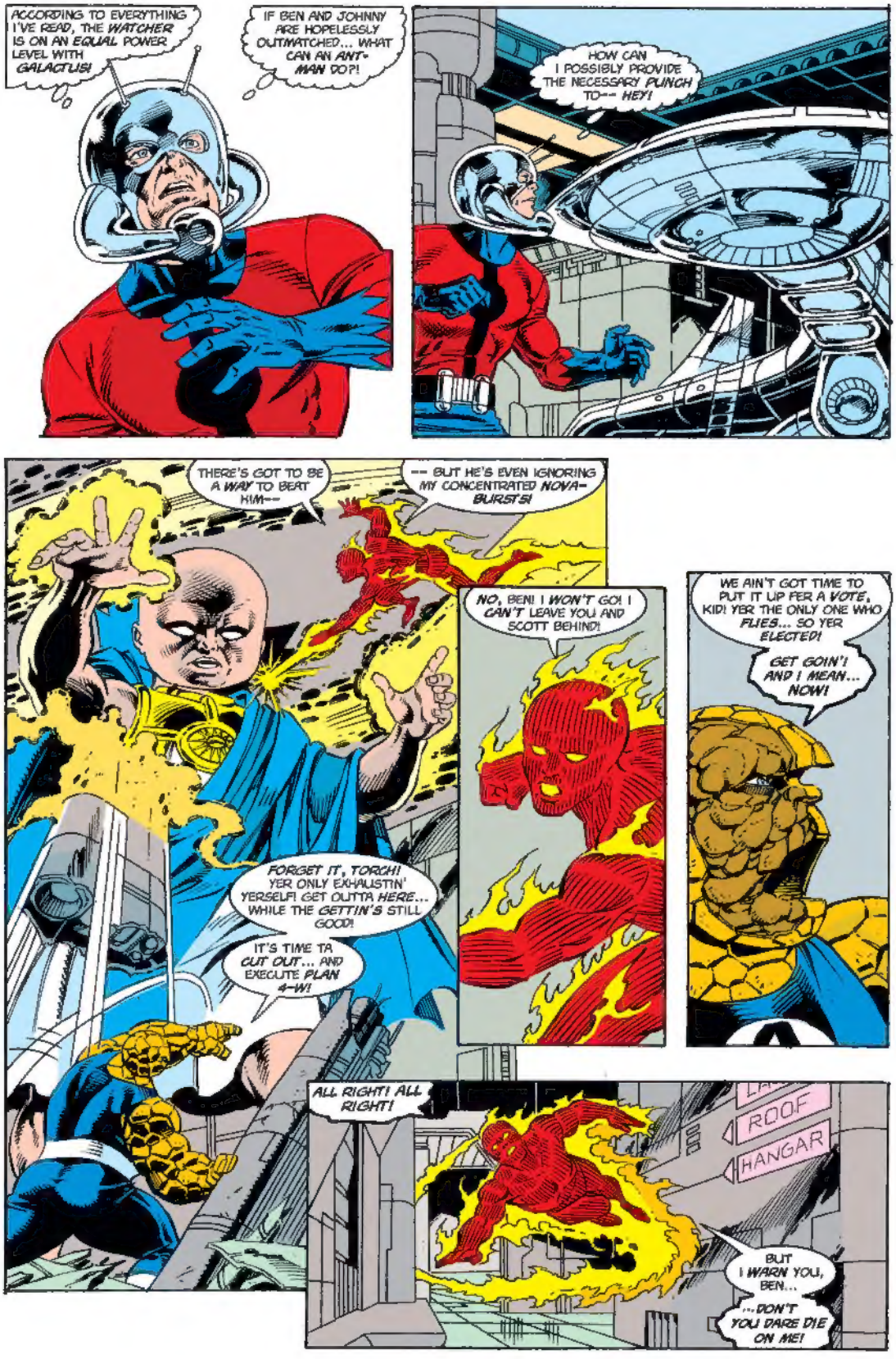

--IF HE KNEW HIS SHAPE-SHIFTING EX-WIFE WAS SECRETLY STALKING HIM!
BUT HE'S HEADED FOR SERIOUS DANGER--
-- AND I CAN'T LET HIM FACE IT ALONE!
AND, EVEN AS THE EVER-LUSCIOUS LYJA BEGINS HER OWN MAD TREK TOWARD THE ISLE OF MANHATTAN--

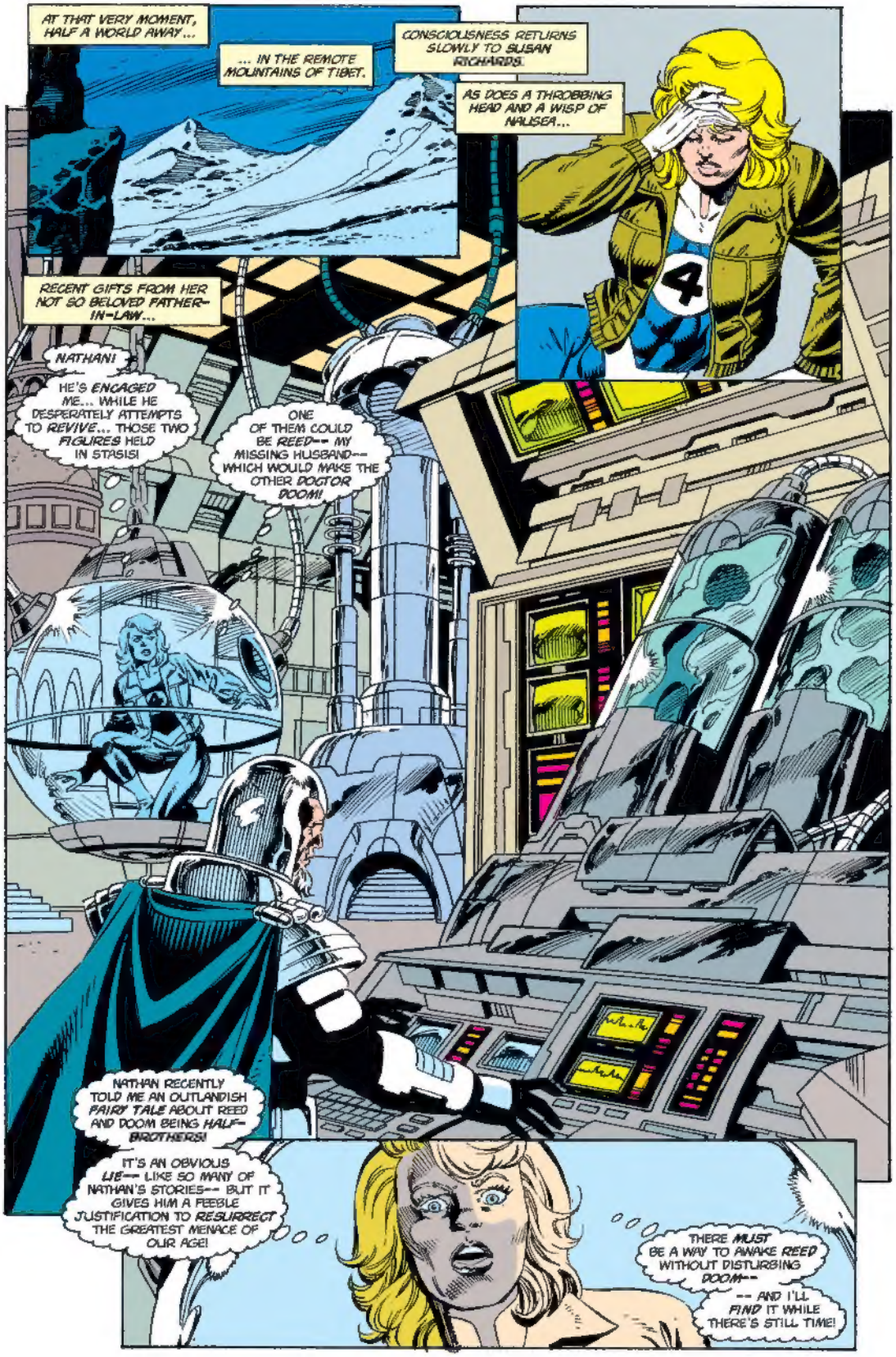
— WE'LL RACE AHEAD TO THE WORLD-FAMOUS HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...
YO, SCOTT—!
SING OUT AS SOON AS THE STEALTH-HAWK IS ALL FUELED UP'N READY TA GO!
ALMOST DONE, BEN!
WE CAN LEAVE AS SOON AS JOHNNY ARRIVES!
WHERE THE HECK IS THAT FLAME-FACED CHOWDERHEAD?
WE CAN'T WAIT ON HIM FOREVER!
SIMMER DOWN, THING!
I'M HERE!
IT'S ABOUT TIME, JUNIOR! YER SISTER COULD BE IN A WHOLE PACK'A TROUBLE!
TELL ME ABOUT IT! I CERTAINLY DIDN'T JOURNEY HALFWAY ACROSS THIS COUNTRY BECAUSE I MISSED YOUR UGLY MUG!
HAVE YOU GUYS MANAGED TO TRACK DOWN SUE'S CURRENT LOCATION?
WE PINPOINTED HER HOMING BEACON TO A MOUNTAIN IN TIBET— BUT IT SUDDENLY STOPPED BROADCASTING!
BUT THAT COULD MEAN—
STOW IT, KID! THERE AIN'T NO NEED TA JUMP TO ANY FALSE CONCLUSIONS!
THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY, BUT— HOLD IT! WHAT'S THIS—?!
JOHNNY! BEN! LOOK—!
WE HAVE AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR!

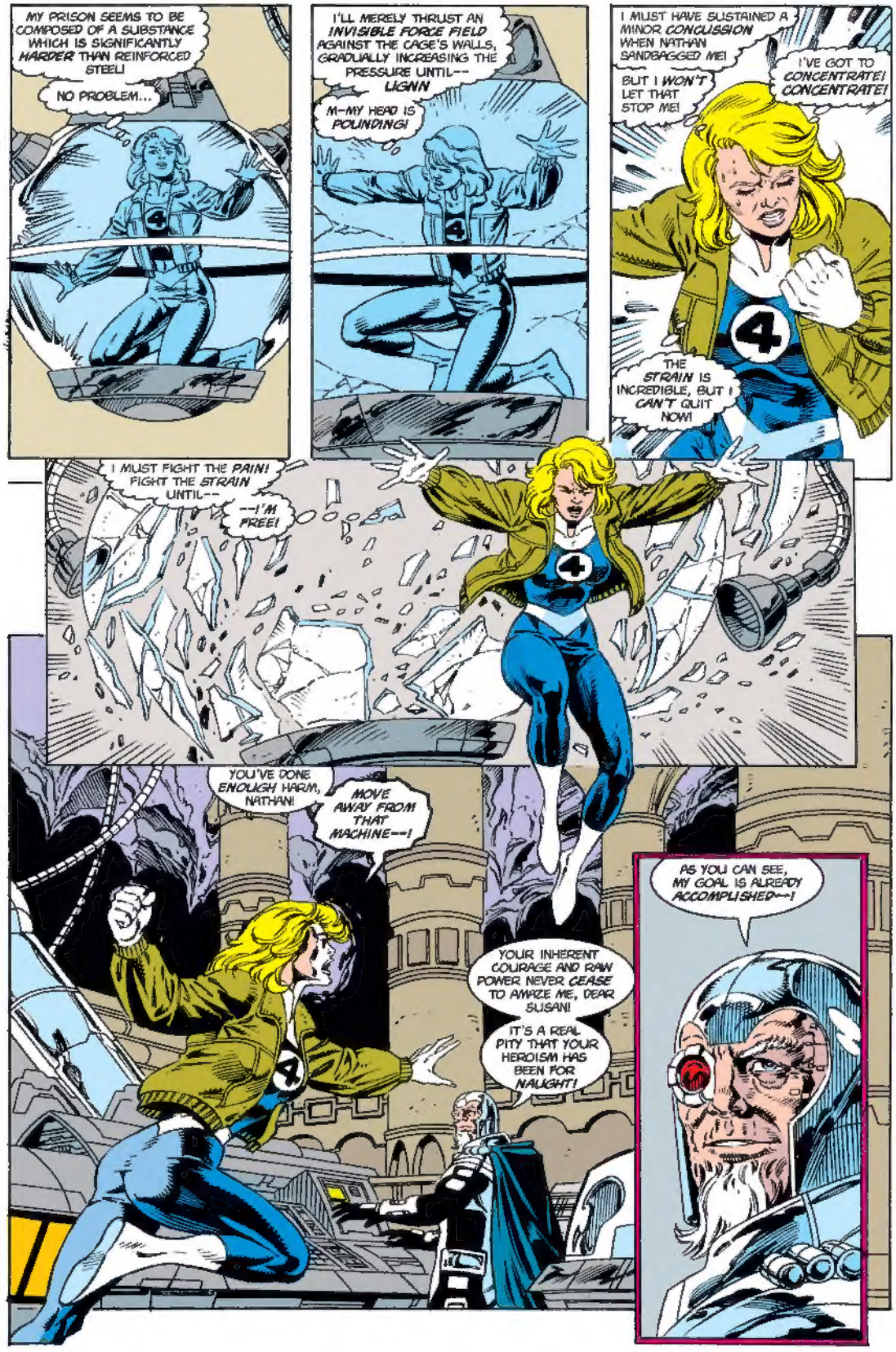

BE AT EASE, MY FRIENDS! IT IS ONLY I...
...THE WATCHER!
THOUGH I AM SWORN NEVER TO INTERFERE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER PLANETS... I HAVE DETECTED A DISTANT SKRULL WARSHIP WHICH IS EVEN NOW SPEEDING TOWARD THE EARTH!
THIS WORLD CAN ONLY BE SAVED... IF YOU LEAVE IMMEDIATELY... AND INTERCEPT THAT SHIP... BEFORE IT ENTERS THIS SOLAR SYSTEM!
I DON'T GET IT! WHY WOULD THE SKRULLS SUDDENLY CHOOSE TO ATTACK US?!
SUMTHIN' SMELLS REAL FISHY, BALDY! THE LAST TIME WE SAW YA, YA SAID YA WUS DONE BEIN' A WATCHER--
-- AND THAT YA WUS GONNA EXILE YERSELF TO SOME DISTANT PLACE!*
* IN ISSUE #392. --METICULOUS MIKE
WHAT HAPPENED? HOW COME YA CHANGED YER MIND? AND WHY SHOW UP NOW?!
WE AIN'T GOIN' ON NO WILD GOOSE CHASE! NOT WHEN WE GOTTA FIND SUE!
FOR A LONG--SEEMINGLY ENDLESS-- MOMENT, THE WATCHER STANDS IMMOBILE.
AND, WHEN HE FINALLY CHOOSES TO SPEAK, HIS VOICE IS AS COLD AS IT IS SOMBER.
I APOLOGIZE.
I HAVE APPARENTLY UNDERESTIMATED YOU...


I WILL NOT DO SO AGAIN!
LOOK OUT! THE WATCHER'S GOING CRAZY!
HE'S ATTACKING US!
BUT WHY--?! WHY WOULD HE SUDDENLY TURN AGAINST YOU?!
HIS REASONS DON'T MATTER A HECK OF A LOT NOW, SCOTT!
OUR MAIN CONCERN IS FINDING A WAY TO STOP HIM!
THIS JOKER IS PRACTICALLY INVINCIBLE!
THEY SAID THE SAME ABOUT GALACTUS... BUT WE STILL FOUND A WAY TO SCRAMBLE HIS EGGS!
MAYBE A FEW HIGH INTENSITY FLAME-BLASTS--
-- CAN SHOW OUR FORMER FRIEND THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS!
THOUGH YOUR POWER IS QUITE FORMIDABLE, TORCH--

-- IT CANNOT HARM ONE WHO SUMMONS THE COSMIC WHIRLWIND WITH A SIMPLE GESTURE!
WHOA! I'M CAUGHT IN THE BACKWASH!
TAILSPINNING OUT OF CONTROL--!
THIS DON'T MAKE ANY SENSE! WHY WOULD THE WATCHER SUDDENLY TRY TA CLOBBER US?
THIS CLOWN COULD BE SOME KIND'A IMPOSTOR, BUT... WHETHER HE'S REAL OR NOT... I STILL GOTTA DISTRACT HIM UNTIL THE TORCH CAN RIGHT HIMSELF!
OPEN WIDE, BALDY!
I GOT A L'IL TOOTHPICK FER YA TA CHOMP ON, AND-- WHAT THE?!
I FEAR I MUST REFUSE YOUR GENEROUS GIFT, THING!
HOWEVER, I DO HOPE YOU WILL ACCEPT MINE!
YEOW! THE HOT WATER PIPES ARE BURSTIN' THROUGH THE BLASTED FLOOR!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GONNA BE MORE PAINFUL: BEIN' SCALDED BY STEAMIN' WATER--
-- OR GETTIN' SOAKED BY SOME UNION PLUMBER TA REPAIR THE DAMAGE!


ACCORDING TO EVERYTHING I'VE READ, THE WATCHER IS ON AN EQUAL POWER LEVEL WITH GALACTUS!
IF BEN AND JOHNNY ARE HOPELESSLY OUTMATCHED... WHAT CAN AN ANT-MAN DO?!
HOW CAN I POSSIBLY PROVIDE THE NECESSARY PUNCH TO-- HEY!
THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY TO BEAT HIM--
-- BUT HE'S EVEN IGNORING MY CONCENTRATED NOVA-BURSTS!
NO, BEN! I WON'T GO! I CAN'T LEAVE YOU AND SCOTT BEHIND!
WE AIN'T GOT TIME TO PUT IT UP FER A VOTE, KID! YER THE ONLY ONE WHO FLIES... SO YER ELECTED!
GET GOIN'! AND I MEAN... NOW!
FORGET IT, TORCH! YER ONLY EXHAUSTIN' YERSELF! GET OUTTA HERE... WHILE THE GETTIN'S STILL GOOD!
IT'S TIME TA CUT OUT... AND EXECUTE PLAN 4-W!
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT!
ROOF
HANGAR
BUT I WARN YOU, BEN...
...DON'T YOU DARE DIE ON ME!

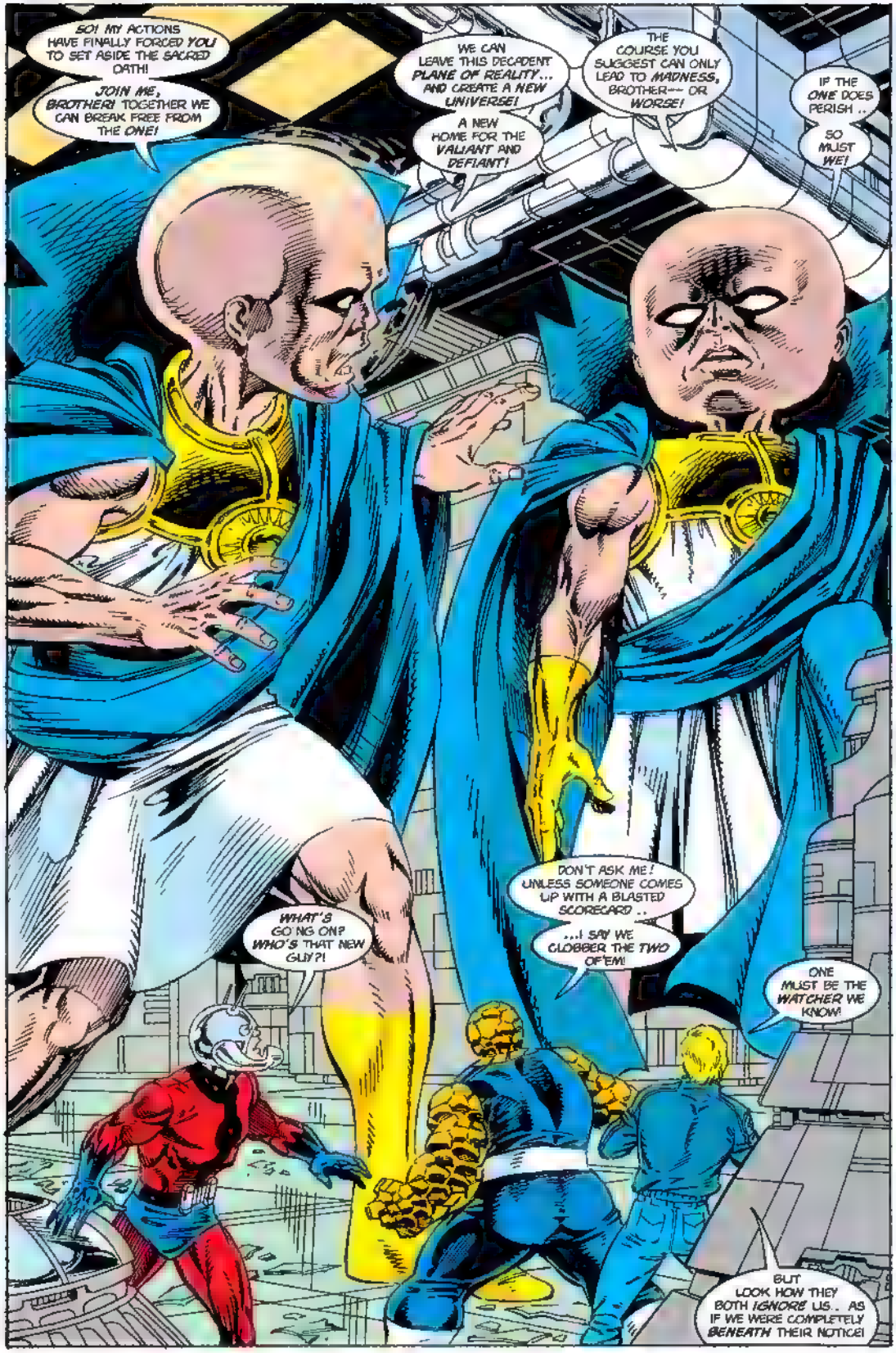

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, HALF A WORLD AWAY...
... IN THE REMOTE MOUNTAINS OF TIBET.
CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS SLOWLY TO SUSAN RICHARDS.
AS DOES A THROBBING HEAD AND A WISP OF NAUSEA...
RECENT GIFTS FROM HER NOT SO BELOVED FATHER-IN-LAW...
NATHAN!
HE'S ENGAGED ME... WHILE HE DESPERATELY ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE... THOSE TWO FIGURES HELD IN STASIS!
ONE OF THEM COULD BE REED-- MY MISSING HUSBAND-- WHICH WOULD MAKE THE OTHER DOCTOR DOOM!
NATHAN RECENTLY TOLD ME AN OUTLANDISH FAIRY TALE ABOUT REED AND DOOM BEING HALF-BROTHERS!
IT'S AN OBVIOUS LIE-- LIKE SO MANY OF NATHAN'S STORIES-- BUT IT GIVES HIM A FEEBLE JUSTIFICATION TO RESURRECT THE GREATEST MENACE OF OUR AGE!
THERE MUST BE A WAY TO AWAKE REED WITHOUT DISTURBING DOOM--
-- AND I'LL FIND IT WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!

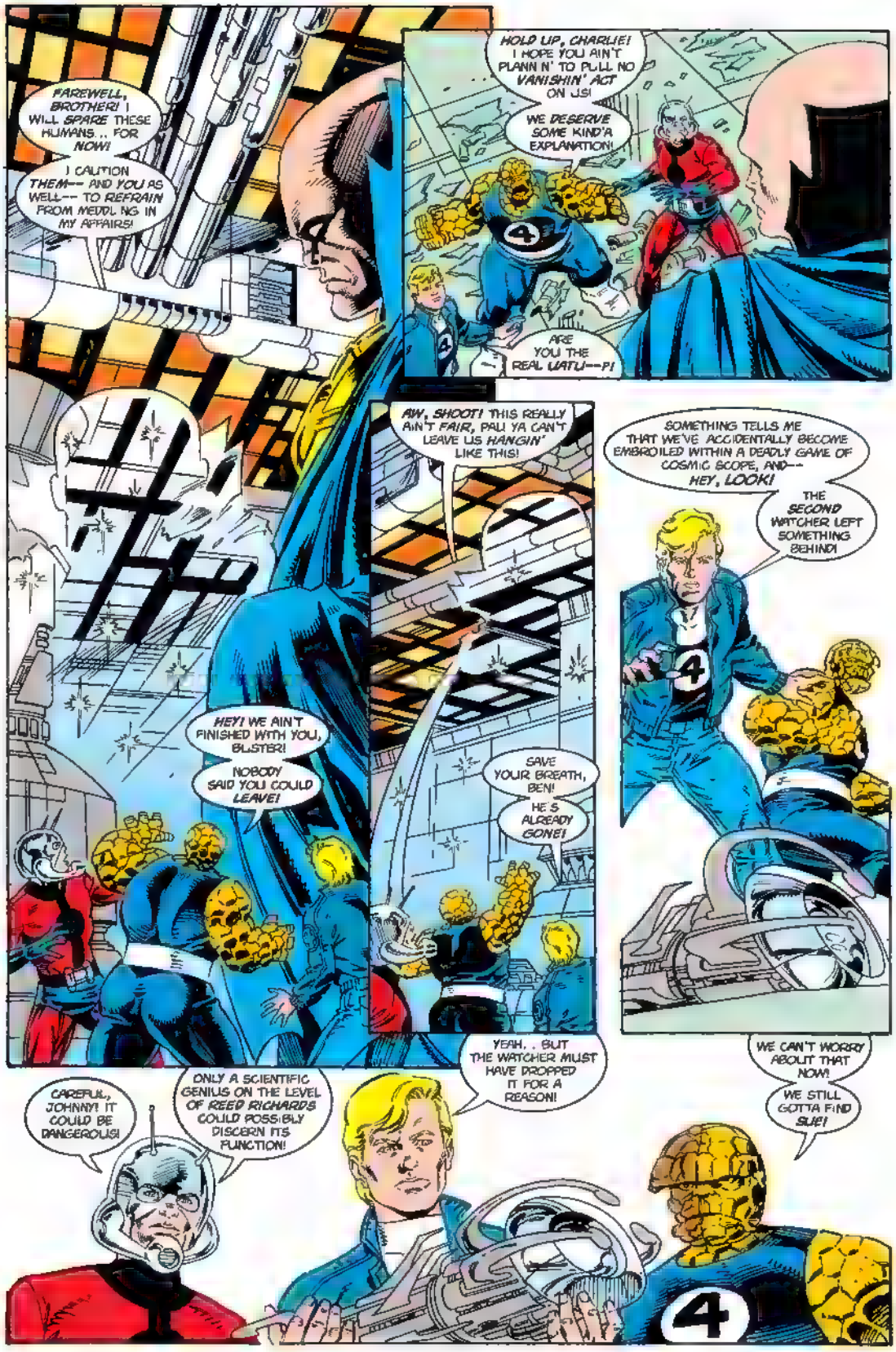

MY PRISON SEEMS TO BE COMPOSED OF A SUBSTANCE WHICH IS SIGNIFICANTLY HARDER THAN REINFORCED STEEL!
NO PROBLEM...
I'LL MERELY THRUST AN INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD AGAINST THE CAGE'S WALLS, GRADUALLY INCREASING THE PRESSURE UNTIL--
UGNN
M-MY HEAD IS POUNDING!
I MUST HAVE SUSTAINED A MINOR CONCUSSION WHEN NATHAN SANDBAGGED ME!
BUT I WON'T LET THAT STOP ME!
I'VE GOT TO CONCENTRATE! CONCENTRATE!
THE STRAIN IS INCREDIBLE, BUT I CAN'T QUIT NOW!
I MUST FIGHT THE PAIN! FIGHT THE STRAIN UNTIL--
--I'M FREE!
YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH HARM, NATHAN!
MOVE AWAY FROM THAT MACHINE--!
YOUR INHERENT COURAGE AND RAW POWER NEVER CEASE TO AMAZE ME, DEAR SUSAN!
IT'S A REAL PITY THAT YOUR HEROISM HAS BEEN FOR NAUGHT!
AS YOU CAN SEE, MY GOAL IS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED--!

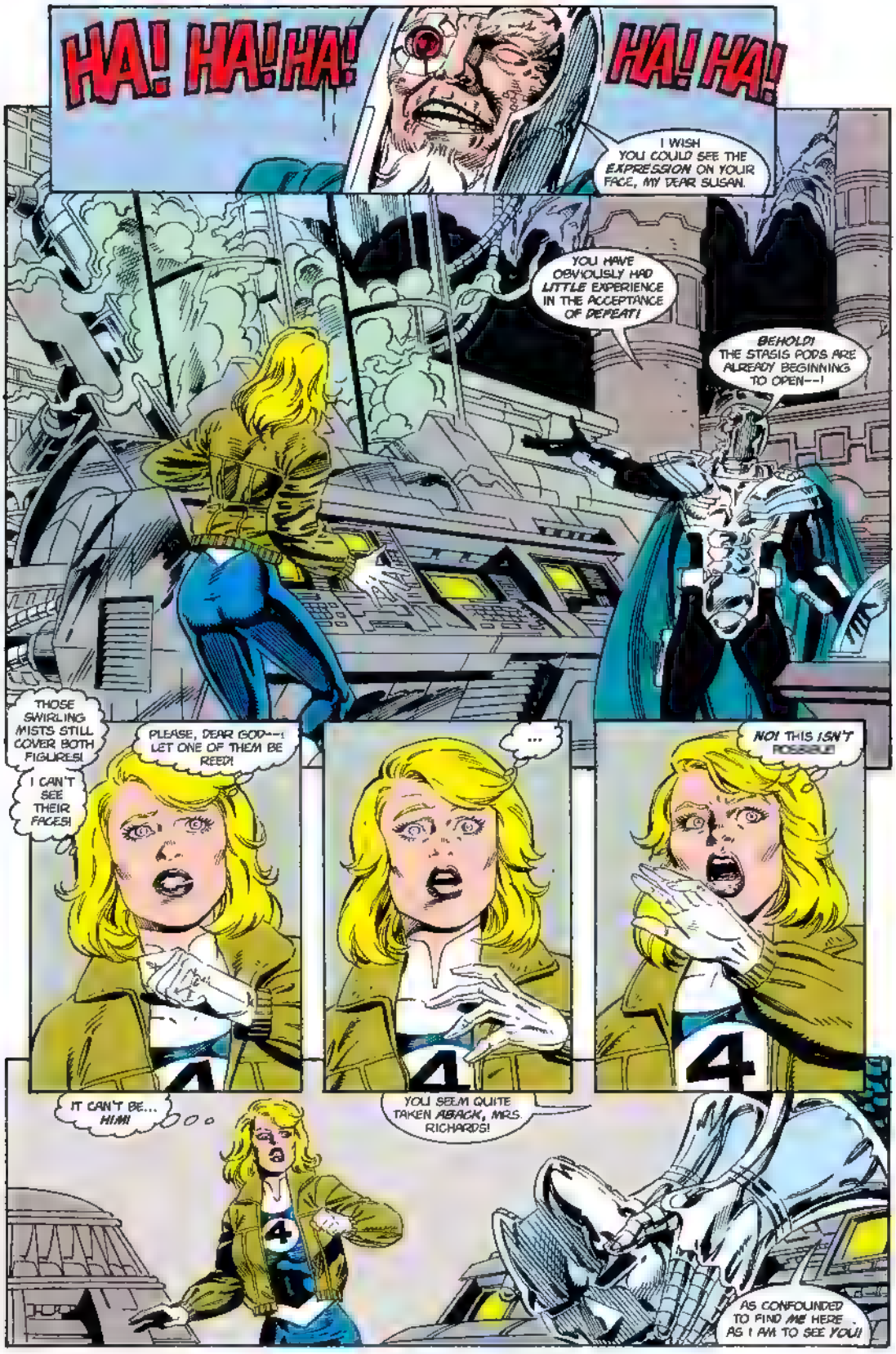
MEANWHILE, BACK AT FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA. .
FER A GUY WHO NEVER GETS INVOLVED--
-- YA SURE KNOW YER DEFENSIVE MOVES!
BUT I'LL BET YA A.IN'T GOT THE GUTS TA TAKE ME ON MAN-TA-MAN!
YER NUTHIN' WITHOUT YER COSMIC POWER!
ARE YOU INSANE, GRIMM?
DO YOU TRULY SEEK TO GOAD ME INTO BATTLE WITH MY FISTS.. AS MERE HUMANS DO?!
WHY NOT? WHAT'CHA GOT TO LOSE... ASIDE FROM A MOUTHFUL'A TEETH?!
BEN MUST HAVE SEEN ME. ENTER THE STEALTH-HAWK'S COCKPIT!
WE'LL ONLY GET ONE SHOT AT HIM, AND IT'S GOT TO BE RIGHT ON THE MONEY!
NOW, SCOTT! HIT THE IGNITION-- NOW!
BROOOOM!

A VERY IMPRESSIVE MANEUVER, GRIMM!
I SALUTE YOUR INGENUITY!
ANY OTHER ADVERSARY WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN INCINERATED BY YOUR SHIP'S FIERY EXHAUST!
BUT I AM THE WATCHER!
I HAVE WITNESSED THE BIRTH OF SUNS--
-- AS WELL AS THE FINAL AGONIES OF MANY A RAGING NOVA!
UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN SUFFER YOUR IMPUDENCE NO MORE!
THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME TO-- WAIT! WHAT FOOLISHNESS IS THIS?!
THE HUMAN TORCH ARRIVES-- BEARING A WEAPON WHICH IS UNFAMILIAR TO ME!
IT'S ONE OF REED'S LEGACIES, CHUM!
I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER HOW MR. FANTASTIC TRIED TO PREPARE FOR ANY POSSIBLE EMERGENCY--
-- EVEN SOMETHING AS ABSURD AS THE WATCHER TURNING ROGUE!
SAVE THE BREECH FOR HIS EULOGY, JOHNNY BOY!
BLAST 'IM!

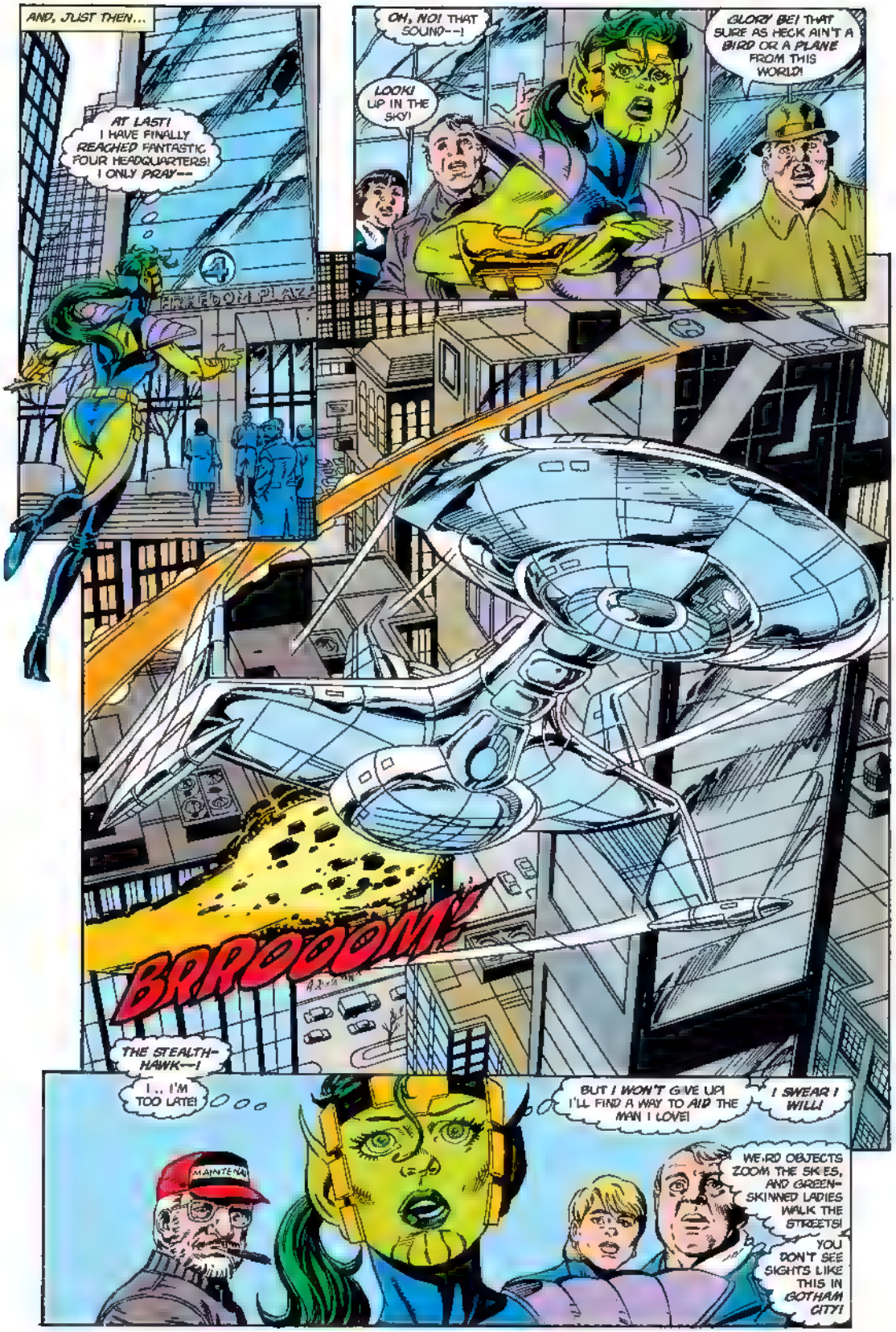
ARRGHHH!
IT'S WORKING—! REED'S DEKION PULSES ARE DRIVING THE COSMIC ENERGY FROM THE WATCHER'S BODY!
HE'S GROWING WEAK! HELPLESS!
NO!
I WILL NOT YIELD!
I WILL NOT FALL!
ZAKA
I CAN DELAY HERE NO LONGER!
I MUST NOW RID MYSELF OF YOU PETTY ANNOYANCES!
THIS IS IT, TROOPS—! OUR LAST CHANCE TA PULVERIZE 'IM!
HIT 'IM WITH ALL YOU'VE GOT!
NO! EVEN UNITED YOU DO NOT POSSESS THE NECESSARY POWER TO DEFEAT HIM—
—BUT I DO!

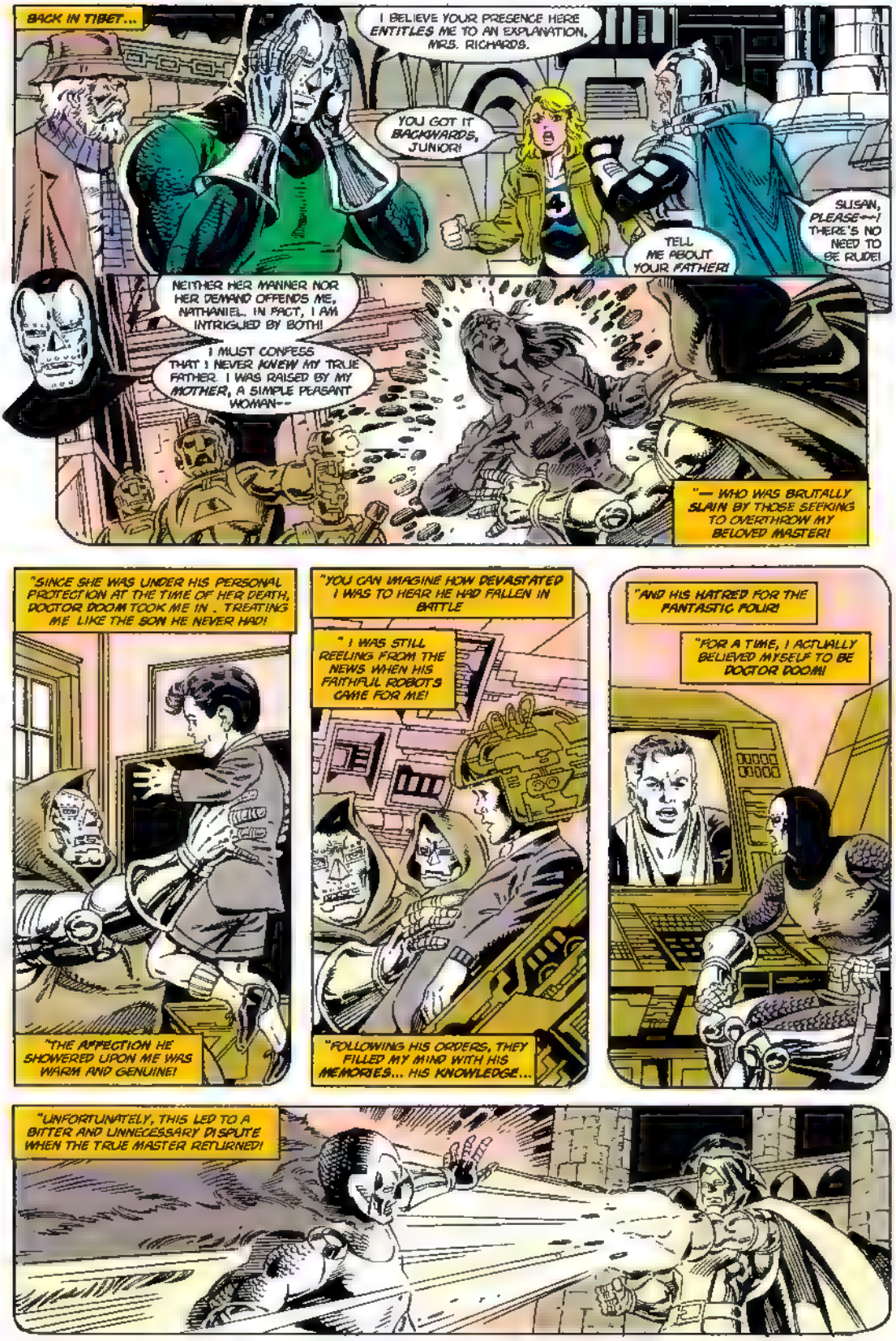

SO! MY ACTIONS HAVE FINALLY FORCED YOU TO SET ASIDE THE SACRED OATH!
JOIN ME, BROTHER! TOGETHER WE CAN BREAK FREE FROM THE ONE!
WE CAN LEAVE THIS DECADENT PLANE OF REALITY... AND CREATE A NEW UNIVERSE!
A NEW HOME FOR THE VALIANT AND DEFIANT!
THE COURSE YOU SUGGEST CAN ONLY LEAD TO MADNESS, BROTHER--- OR WORSE!
IF THE ONE DOES PERISH ..
SO MUST WE!
WHAT'S GO NG ON? WHO'S THAT NEW GUY?!
DON'T ASK ME! UNLESS SOMEONE COMES UP WITH A BLASTED SCORECARD ..
...I SAY WE CLOBBER THE TWO OF 'EM!
ONE MUST BE THE WATCHER WE KNOW!
BUT LOOK HOW THEY BOTH IGNORE US.. AS IF WE WERE COMPLETELY BENEATH THEIR NOTICE!

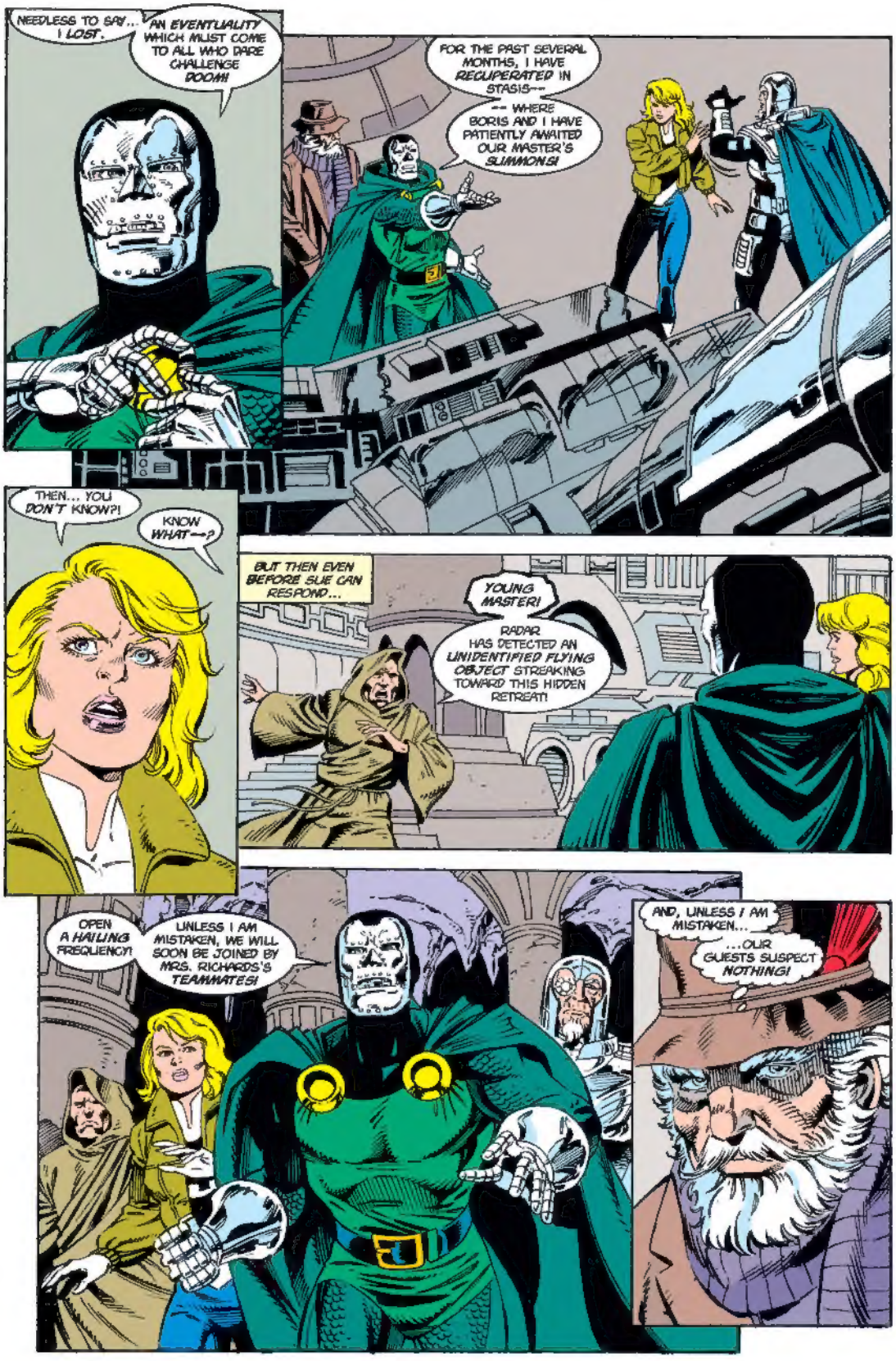

FAREWELL, BROTHER! I WILL SPARE THESE HUMANS... FOR NOW!
I CAUTION THEM-- AND YOU AS WELL-- TO REFRAIN FROM MEDDLING IN MY AFFAIRS!
HOLD UP, CHARLIE! I HOPE YOU AIN'T PLANN'N' TO PULL NO VANISHIN' ACT ON US!
WE DESERVE SOME KIND'A EXPLANATION!
ARE YOU THE REAL UATU--?!
AW, SHOOT! THIS REALLY AIN'T FAIR, PAL! YA CAN'T LEAVE US HANGIN' LIKE THIS!
HEY! WE AIN'T FINISHED WITH YOU, BLISTER!
NOBODY SAID YOU COULD LEAVE!
SAVE YOUR BREATH, BEN!
HE'S ALREADY GONE!
SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT WE'VE ACCIDENTALLY BECOME EMBROILED WITHIN A DEADLY GAME OF COSMIC SCOPE, AND--
HEY, LOOK!
THE SECOND WATCHER LEFT SOMETHING BEHIND!
WE CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT NOW!
WE STILL GOTTA FIND SUE!
YEAH... BUT THE WATCHER MUST HAVE DROPPED IT FOR A REASON!
ONLY A SCIENTIFIC GENIUS ON THE LEVEL OF REED RICHARDS COULD POSSIBLY DISCERN ITS FUNCTION!
CAREFUL, JOHNNY! IT COULD BE DANGEROUS!

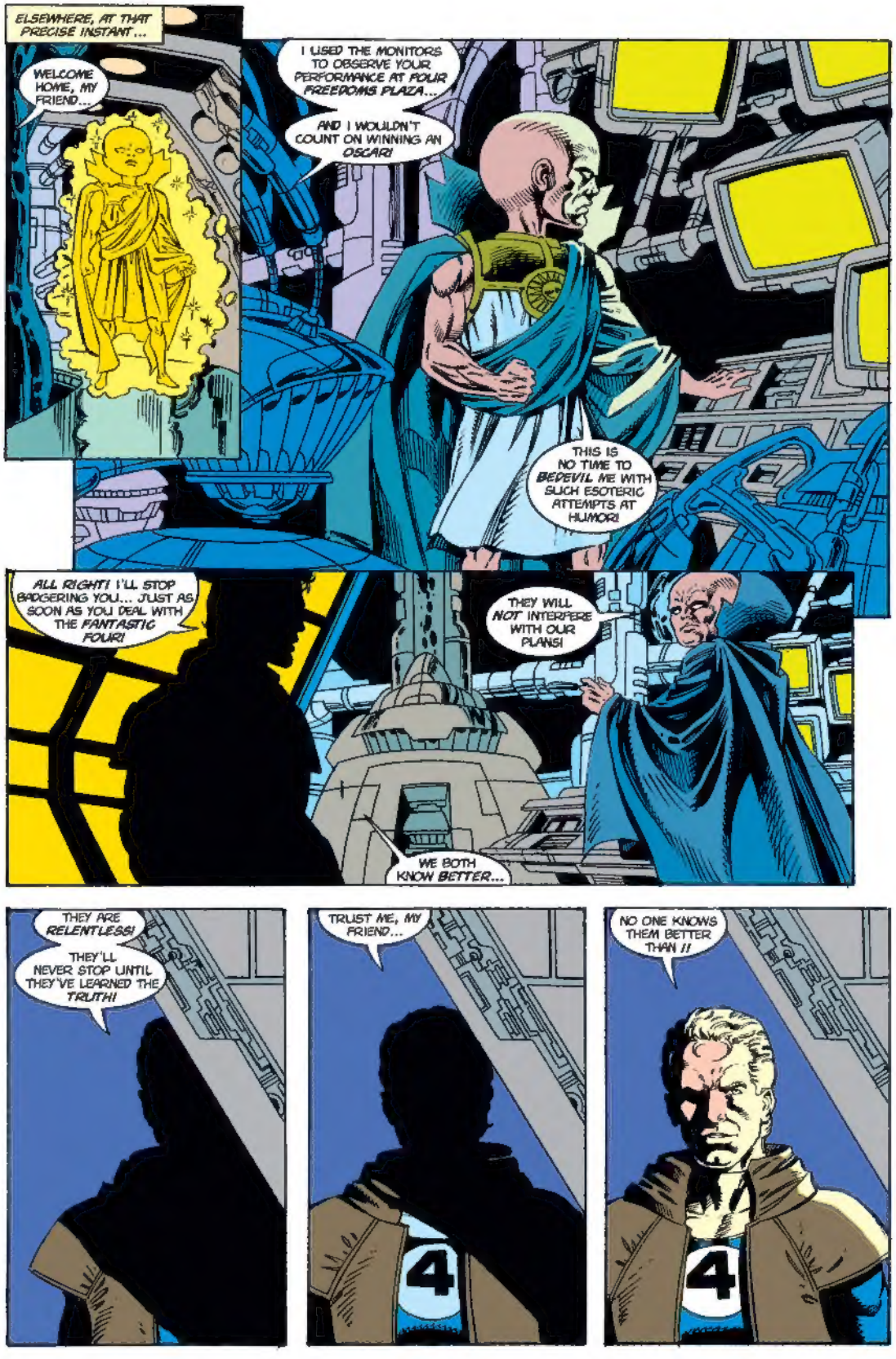

HA! HA! HA!
HA! HA!
I WISH YOU COULD SEE THE EXPRESSION ON YOUR FACE, MY DEAR SUSAN.
YOU HAVE OBVIOUSLY HAD LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF DEFEAT!
BEHOLD! THE STASIS PODS ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO OPEN--!
THOSE SWIRLING MISTS STILL COVER BOTH FIGURES!
I CAN'T SEE THEIR FACES!
PLEASE, DEAR GOD--! LET ONE OF THEM BE REED!
...
NO! THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE!
IT CAN'T BE... HIM!
YOU SEEM QUITE TAKEN ABACK, MRS. RICHARDS!
AS CONFOUNDED TO FIND ME HERE... AS I AM TO SEE YOU!

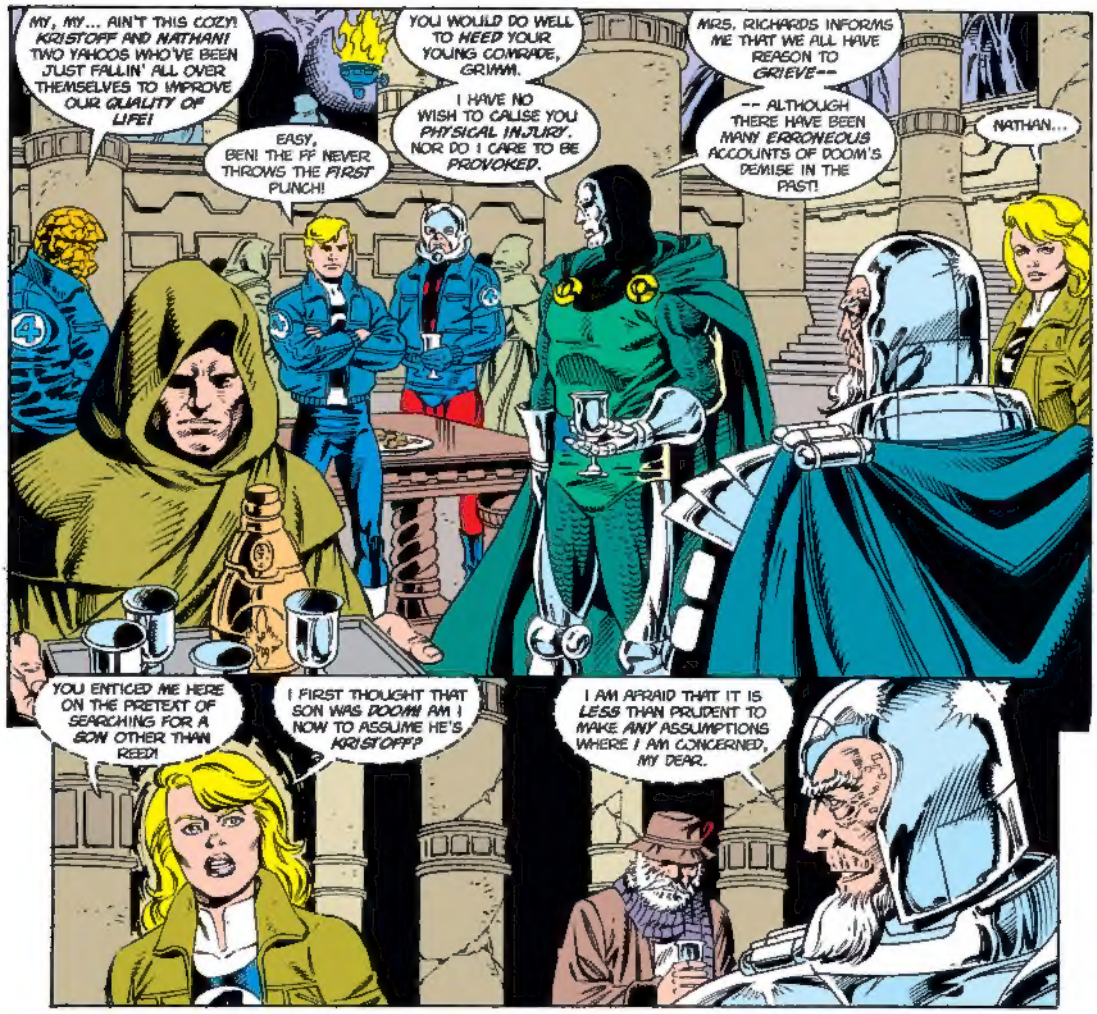
I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT YOU NEVER EXPECTED ANOTHER ENCOUNTER WITH...
KRISTOFF, THE DESIGNATED HEIR TO THE THRONE OF DOOM THE FIRST!
FORGIVE MY LACK OF MANNERS, MRS. RICHARDS. MY COMPANION IS BORIS, A FAITHFUL RETAINER.
WILL YOU DO ME THE HONOR OF INTRODUCING YOUR ASSOCIATE?
YOU MAY CALL ME NATHAN OR NATHANIEL RICHARDS, SON.
AH, YES.. I NOW SEE THE RESEMBLANCE TO DOCTOR RICHARDS.
WE HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS, SIR. THE MASTER'S DOSSIER ON YOU WAS WOEFULLY INCOMPLETE.
I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT WE HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR OUR TIMELY REVIVAL

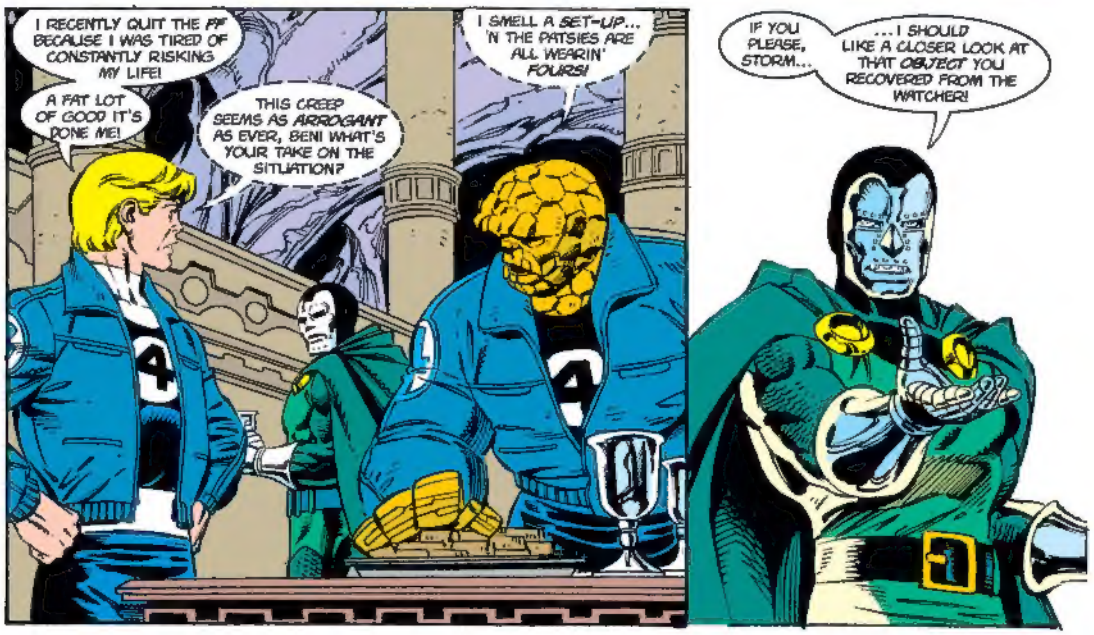

AND, JUST THEN...
AT LAST! I HAVE FINALLY REACHED FANTASTIC FOUR HEADQUARTERS! I ONLY PRAY--
4
FREEDOM PLAZA
OH, NO! THAT SOUND--!
LOOK! UP IN THE SKY!
GLORY BE! THAT SURE AS HECK AIN'T A BIRD OR A PLANE FROM THIS WORLD!
BRROOOM!
THE STEALTH-HAWK--!
I.. I'M TOO LATE!
BUT I WON'T GIVE UP! I'LL FIND A WAY TO AID THE MAN I LOVE!
I SWEAR I WILL!
MAINTENANCE
WEIRD OBJECTS ZOOM THE SKIES, AND GREEN-SKINNED LADIES WALK THE STREETS!
YOU DON'T SEE SIGHTS LIKE THIS IN GOTHAM CITY!

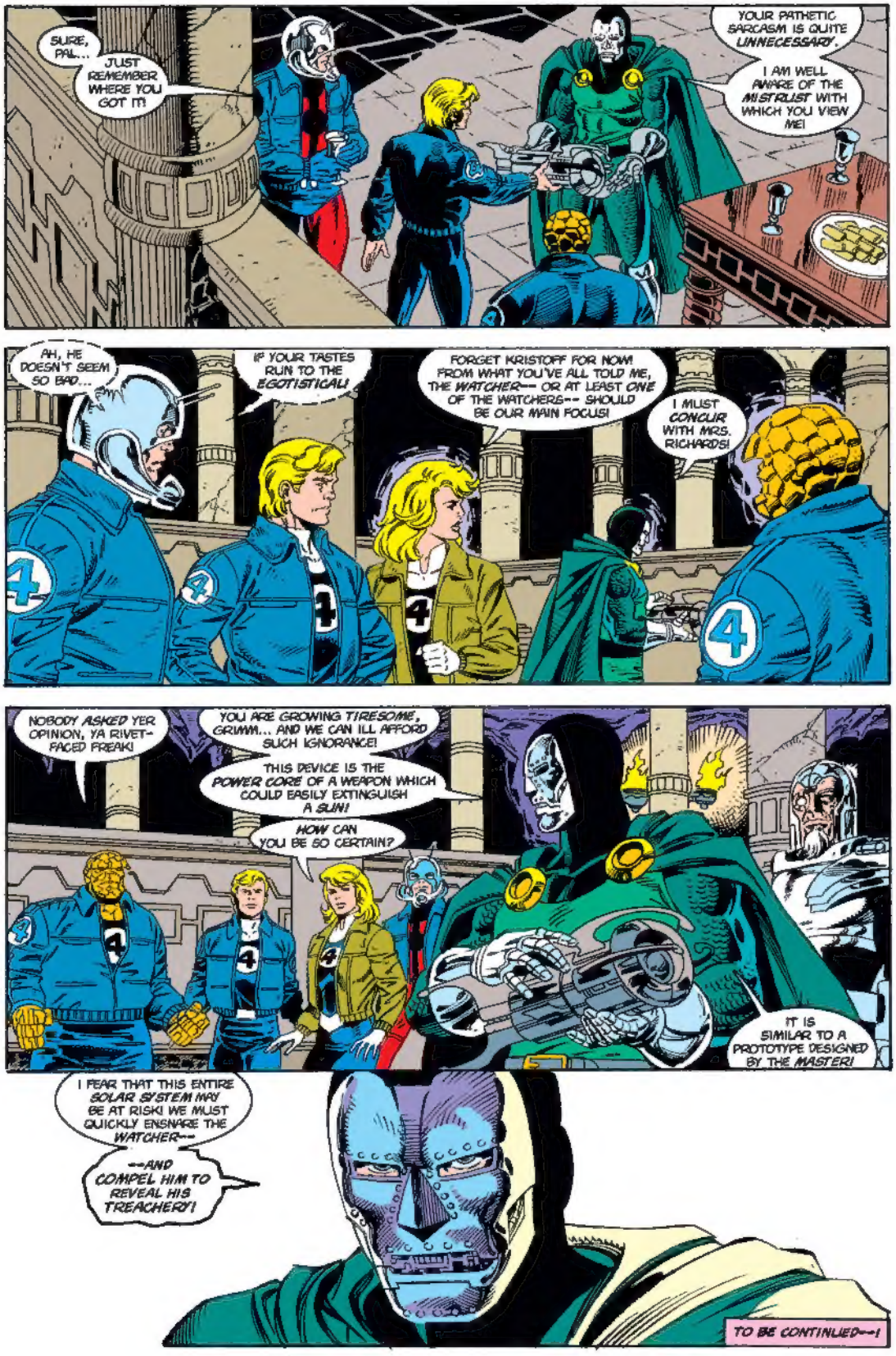

BACK IN TIBET...
I BELIEVE YOUR PRESENCE HERE ENTITLES ME TO AN EXPLANATION, MRS. RICHARDS.
YOU GOT IT BACKWARDS, JUNIOR!
SUSAN, PLEASE--! THERE'S NO NEED TO BE RUDE!
TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FATHER!
NEITHER HER MANNER NOR HER DEMAND OFFENDS ME, NATHANIEL. IN FACT, I AM INTRIGUED BY BOTH!
I MUST CONFESS THAT I NEVER KNEW MY TRUE FATHER. I WAS RAISED BY MY MOTHER, A SIMPLE PEASANT WOMAN--
"-- WHO WAS BRUTALLY SLAIN BY THOSE SEEKING TO OVERTHROW MY BELOVED MASTER!
"SINCE SHE WAS UNDER HIS PERSONAL PROTECTION AT THE TIME OF HER DEATH, DOCTOR DOOM TOOK ME IN . TREATING ME LIKE THE SON HE NEVER HAD!
"THE AFFECTION HE SHOWERED UPON ME WAS WARM AND GENUINE!
"YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW DEVASTATED I WAS TO HEAR HE HAD FALLEN IN BATTLE
" I WAS STILL REELING FROM THE NEWS WHEN HIS FAITHFUL ROBOTS CAME FOR ME!
"FOLLOWING HIS ORDERS, THEY FILLED MY MIND WITH HIS MEMORIES... HIS KNOWLEDGE...
"AND HIS HATRED FOR THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
"FOR A TIME, I ACTUALLY BELIEVED MYSELF TO BE DOCTOR DOOM!
"UNFORTUNATELY, THIS LED TO A BITTER AND UNNECESSARY DISPUTE WHEN THE TRUE MASTER RETURNED!


NEEDLESS TO SAY... I LOST.
AN EVENTUALITY WHICH MUST COME TO ALL WHO DARE CHALLENGE DOOM!
FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, I HAVE RECUPERATED IN STASIS---
-- WHERE BORIS AND I HAVE PATIENTLY AWAITED OUR MASTER'S SUMMONS!
THEN... YOU DON'T KNOW?!
KNOW WHAT --?
BUT THEN EVEN BEFORE SUE CAN RESPOND...
YOUNG MASTER!
RADAR HAS DETECTED AN UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT STREAKING TOWARD THIS HIDDEN RETREAT!
OPEN A HAILING FREQUENCY!
UNLESS I AM MISTAKEN, WE WILL SOON BE JOINED BY MRS. RICHARDS'S TEAMMATES!
AND, UNLESS I AM MISTAKEN...
...OUR GUESTS SUSPECT NOTHING!


ELSEWHERE, AT THAT PRECISE INSTANT...
WELCOME HOME, MY FRIEND...
I USED THE MONITORS TO OBSERVE YOUR PERFORMANCE AT FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA...
AND I WOULDN'T COUNT ON WINNING AN OSCAR!
THIS IS NO TIME TO BEDEVIL ME WITH SUCH ESOTERIC ATTEMPTS AT HUMOR!
ALL RIGHT! I'LL STOP BADGERING YOU... JUST AS SOON AS YOU DEAL WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
THEY WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH OUR PLANS!
WE BOTH KNOW BETTER...
THEY ARE RELENTLESS!
THEY'LL NEVER STOP UNTIL THEY'VE LEARNED THE TRUTH!
TRUST ME, MY FRIEND...
NO ONE KNOWS THEM BETTER THAN I!


MY, MY... AIN'T THIS COZY! KRISTOFF AND NATHAN! TWO YAHOOS WHO'VE BEEN JUST FALLIN' ALL OVER THEMSELVES TO IMPROVE OUR QUALITY OF LIFE!
EASY, BEN! THE FF NEVER THROWS THE FIRST PUNCH!
YOU WOULD DO WELL TO HEED YOUR YOUNG COMRADE, GRIMM.
I HAVE NO WISH TO CAUSE YOU PHYSICAL INJURY, NOR DO I CARE TO BE PROVOKED.
MRS. RICHARDS INFORMS ME THAT WE ALL HAVE REASON TO GRIEVE--
-- ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ERRONEOUS ACCOUNTS OF DOOM'S DEMISE IN THE PAST!
NATHAN...
YOU ENTICED ME HERE ON THE PRETEXT OF SEARCHING FOR A SON OTHER THAN REED!
I FIRST THOUGHT THAT SON WAS DOOM! AM I NOW TO ASSUME HE'S KRISTOFF?
I AM AFRAID THAT IT IS LESS THAN PRUDENT TO MAKE ANY ASSUMPTIONS WHERE I AM CONCERNED, MY DEAR.


I RECENTLY QUIT THE FF BECAUSE I WAS TIRED OF CONSTANTLY RISKING MY LIFE!
A FAT LOT OF GOOD IT'S DONE ME!
THIS CREEP SEEMS AS ARROGANT AS EVER, BEN! WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THE SITUATION?
I SMELL A SET-UP... 'N THE PATSIES ARE ALL WEARIN' FOURS!
IF YOU PLEASE, STORM...
...I SHOULD LIKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THAT OBJECT YOU RECOVERED FROM THE WATCHER!


SURE, PAL... JUST REMEMBER WHERE YOU GOT IT!
YOUR PATHETIC SARCASM IS QUITE UNNECESSARY.
I AM WELL AWARE OF THE MISTRUST WITH WHICH YOU VIEW ME!
AH, HE DOESN'T SEEM SO BAD...
IF YOUR TASTES RUN TO THE EGOTISTICAL!
FORGET KRISTOFF FOR NOW! FROM WHAT YOU'VE ALL TOLD ME, THE WATCHER-- OR AT LEAST ONE OF THE WATCHERS-- SHOULD BE OUR MAIN FOCUS!
I MUST CONCUR WITH MRS. RICHARDS!
NOBODY ASKED YER OPINION, YA RIVET-FACED FREAK!
YOU ARE GROWING TIRESOME, GRIMM... AND WE CAN ILL AFFORD SUCH IGNORANCE!
THIS DEVICE IS THE POWER CORE OF A WEAPON WHICH COULD EASILY EXTINGUISH A SUN!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CERTAIN?
IT IS SIMILAR TO A PROTOTYPE DESIGNED BY THE MASTER!
I FEAR THAT THIS ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM MAY BE AT RISK! WE MUST QUICKLY ENSNARE THE WATCHER--
--AND COMPEL HIM TO REVEAL HIS TREACHERY!
TO BE CONTINUED--!